

FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC GOALS

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC

Year 2 - PROGRESS REPORT

Mission Statement: Because CH Cares, we are leveraging the power of housing to build a foundation for individuals to thrive.

2020-2024 Strategic Goals

- I. **Public Housing:** Develop and implement repositioning strategies for all public housing properties.

2022 Update: Columbia Housing has a diverse repositioning strategy for transitioning the public housing portfolio. Over the past fiscal year, we have made significant strides in formalizing our plan and obtaining appropriate Board of Commissioners approvals.

- II. **Housing Choice Voucher Program:** Maximize leasing capacity based on annual budget authority. Maintain program compliance, in accordance with HUD regulations.

2022 Update: The HCV Program continues to be a standard performer

- III. **Development and Capital Improvements:** Support repositioning of the existing portfolio through recapitalization, conversion, and preservation.

2022 Update: The team began implementing strategies identified in the repositioning plan. Marion Street Highrise has been completely vacated and Allen Benedict Court demolition is near completion.

- IV. **Resident Strategies:** Strengthen relations with the people we serve by increasing mutual accountability and by improving our ability to connect them to vital services in the community that will foster economic self-sufficiency and quality of life opportunities.

2022 Update: Columbia Housing has partnered with the following agencies to assist with improving our ability to connect our residents to vital services in the community that will foster economic self-sufficiency and quality of life opportunities.

New Partnerships

1. Office of the South Carolina Attorney General – The VAWA (Violence Against Women Act Program).
2. Patient Dining Experience – Prisma-Richland Morrison Healthcare – Employment
3. SC Work Midlands to serve on Program Coordinator Committee – Training, Employment and partner services.
4. Life Insurance Provider – Services provided to individuals ages 0-85.
5. Healthy Learner – For Parents and Youth

Program Activities/Services residents benefited from:

Columbia Housing SENIOR Program: There were several supportive programming targeted at providing services and resources for CH's senior population. The strategy adopted supported aging in place while promoting health, access to technology, and

1. Senior Employment Program at Goodwill – 15 residents attended in person and 5 participated virtually.
2. 102 is receiving ongoing health education and blood pressure reading from Prisma Health Coach and Nurses.
3. 70 Seniors were approved to receive The Senior Farmer Market Nutrition Voucher.
4. 59 seniors attended fire and cooking safety classes.
5. 21 Seniors received flu vaccines through DHEC and Prisma Health

YOUTH Program: 19 enrolled in youth program

1. 18 youth attended the Nickelodeon Theater, participated in Indie Grits Projects.
2. 6 youth referred to institution promoting literacy.
3. 2 Youth obtained scholarships.

ROSS Program (Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency):

Columbia Housing was awarded \$401,736.00 in ROSS funding to provide supportive services for public housing families.

The program offered a series of programming centered around workforce development and financial literacy

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY (FSS) PROGRAMS

HUD awarded CH \$109,352.00 in funding to support the FSS Program in 2022. The funds are used to provide coordination of supportive services and assisting the residents with successfully graduating from the program and fulfilling the goals established in their Contract of Participation.

The Resident Executive Council has evolved into a more independent organization through the training and development efforts conducted by CH Resident Services team.

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY (Housing Choice Voucher) – 49 enrolled

- 1. 45 participants*
- 2. 27 employed*
- 3. 6 obtained new employment*
- 4. 234 participated in Life Skills Workshop – to enhance quality of life by connecting them with appropriate supportive services and resources.*

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY (Public Housing) – 49 enrolled

- 1. 43 participants*
- 2. 26 employed*
- 3. 6 obtained new employment*
- 4. 58 participated in Financial Literacy classes/credit counseling*
- 5. 14 improved credit scores*

- V. Homeless Programs:** Expand our collaborative partnerships with county and citywide efforts to reduce families at risk of experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing housing.

2022 Update: In July 2021, Columbia Housing received an allocation of 84 Emergency Housing Vouchers to assisted individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of being homeless with obtaining stable housing. As of February 2022, 42 of the EHV's have executed lease agreements.

The CoC and HOPWA Permanent Supportive Housing Programs continue providing stable housing for homeless families with minimal turnovers. Both programs provided stable housing 72 households that were formerly chronically homeless. The collaborative partnerships and support of local landlords have contributed to the programs' stability.

- VI. Homeownership:** Create opportunities for residents and program participants through the coordination of homebuyer education, resources and activities that increase homeownership opportunities.

2022 Update: Columbia Housing's Homeownership Program continues to be thriving program that serves many individual and families with becoming homeowners. During the fiscal year, 339

individuals attended the Home Buying Education Courses, 73 participated in counseling sessions and 8 HCV families purchased homes and 81 families are active in the program.

- VII. **Human Resources and Personnel Development:** Embrace the agency's new identity by transforming its organizational structure and culture through establishment of a track record for integrity, accountability, collaboration, and exceptional customer service.

2022 Update: We have an established employee performance evaluation process. With this process, we ensure that each employee receives their performance evaluation from their supervisor and an interactive process happens where constructive feedback is given to each employee, commending them on things they've done well and encouraging them in areas where they need improvement.

- *An electronic evaluation process through ADP Workforce Now was adopted.*
- *Our recruitment process has steadily increased and we're able to offer free gym membership for employees and immediate family members to foster a great health and wellness environment*
- *The maintenance recruitment effort has strengthened and we're able to offer recruits the benefit of participating in the apprenticeship program, so they can earn while they learn.*
- *We have an electronic conflict of interest process, which assists us with more efficiently and effectively review and address any conflict-of-interest issues.*
- *We are incorporating an equal employment opportunity training facilitated by our legal team for all employees and one specifically for supervisors that will be held by April 2022; and yearly thereafter.*
- *HR continues to offer exemplary customer service and be a partner with the CH staff members as they assist residents and citizens, alike consistently and efficiently.*

- VIII. **Community Safety and Security:** Develop a comprehensive strategy through the engagement of Columbia Housing's communities and law enforcement agencies that can improve public safety and the quality of life within its communities.

2022 Update: CH Security team created a comprehensive strategy to establish residents as first responders, reduce their vulnerability through awareness tools, provided educational opportunities for residents to engage with law enforcement and engaged partnerships that teach awareness and address resident safety concerns and more. Some of our special initiatives are as follows:

- **Columbia Police Department's Reach One Teach One Program** - An educational program designed to intercept youth before they get in trouble and introduce youth to the everyday lifestyle of incarcerated inmates.

- **Resident Engagement Program** – A quarterly meeting that closes the gap and builds broken relationships between the residents and local law enforcement, by increasing resident’s awareness and knowledge of the law.
- **National Night Out** – An annual event that is designed to introduce the local first responders to the community. It will allow the community and first responders to interact and develop positive relationships.
- **Teen Summit** – An annual event that invites teen residents, local law enforcement, emergency medical service providers, and fire fighters to engage in educational sessions on topics such as bullying, basic first aid, and fire safety.
- **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Education Program** – Provide quarterly education through local community partnerships and enforce housing protections to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking across CH’s core housing and homelessness programs.
- **Fire Safety and Prevention Program** – A quarterly meeting to engage residents through fire safety drills and teach them the importance of protecting their communities from injuries, deaths, and property damage resulting from fires.
- **Residents Task Force Meetings** – A monthly meeting of the Resident Executive Council, local law enforcement and resident safety staff to discuss resident safety concerns, crime prevention measures, and community reports.
- **Community Watch Night** – An annual event that will encourage residents to leave their porch lights on, as a statement against criminal activities. Residents are encouraged to report any suspicious or criminal activity.
- **Neighborhood Associations** – Engage neighborhood associations and local government on strategies for changes and improvements around neighborhood safety, beautification, and social activities.

IX. **IT Operations:** Innovate the way Columbia Housing maintains a smooth functioning of its infrastructure and operational environments that support application deployment to its internal and external customers (i.e. residents and families).

2022 Update: Three key elements were employed to ensure that we provide the best environment for our employees to work in which provides them the confidence to assist the

residents and their families efficiently and effectively. CH 's IT strategies included updating the internal data wiring in our buildings which ensures all technology equipment has a reliable and fast connection, working with an outside partner to ensure that our equipment is always up to date and functioning efficiently, and we upgraded our phone system to provide a reliable calling experience whether employees are at home or in the office.

- X. Communications and Community Engagement:** Build support for housing as a key component of vibrant, sustainable communities through the communication of public information, engagement and advocacy that promotes affordable housing and supports the advancement of low wealth individuals and families.

*2022 Update: **Zooming to the Polls**--Columbia Housing hosts a reoccurring series of online Zoom Virtual Townhall Meetings for residents and the community at-large ahead of key local, state, and national elections.*

The agency brings political candidates, election commission officials, and other voting advocates together to talk about the importance of upcoming elections and the participation of Columbia Housing residents in those elections. The outcome was a more than 20% increase in voter participation among Public Housing residents.

Some of our strategic communication initiatives are as follows:

- ***Housing Power Hour: Get Plugged In**--As affordable housing efforts become more topical in South Carolina, Columbia Housing launched a series of workshops to continually educate the community about the workings of Columbia Housing various programs; and to answer any questions the general public might have about our operations. These efforts proved very helpful to not just the general community, but to public officials and the overall media community.*
- ***Community Impact Report**--Columbia Housing developed a high-quality 8-page printed tabletop document to highlight accomplishments of the agency. Among the accomplishments cited was the establishment of more than 100 new partnerships to provide wrap-around services to residents during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.*
- ***Social Media Short Video Series**--Columbia Housing features its Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director in a series of short videos to address important issues in the community. This gives the leadership at the agency an opportunity to directly communicate with its residents and the community at large, at will. The result has been very successful. So, whether its' the opening of a waiting list, encouraging people to fill out change of income forms during the pandemic, or increasing the pool of available landlords - these 2-minute videos have been extremely successful in moving residents and the community to action.*

- **Regular eBlasts to Columbia Housing's 25K+-member Subscriber Database**—Through our interactive website, Columbia Housing can immediately and directly communicate with its Public Housing & Housing Choice Voucher recipients, community leaders, elected officials, community-based organizations, partners, and the media. These efforts have proved extremely successful in moving audiences to action and to keep them informed of important agency and community news.
- **Max the Vax Campaign to Combat COVID19 Vaccine Hesitancy** --Through a partnership with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control—Columbia Housing received grant funds to launch a community-based media campaign to fight vaccine hesitancy and increase access to COVID19-related health care services. In addition to taking COVID-19 testing and vaccinations directly to our communities, funds have been secured to feature our residents in :30 & :60 public service announcements. The PSAs will be aired throughout the Midlands area of South Carolina encouraging people to get vaccinated to protect their health and the health of their families and community.

XI. Violence Against Women: Enforce and protect the rights of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking to secure and maintain housing without being victimized a second time by being denied housing or losing housing because of the criminally violent acts perpetrated against them.

2022 Update: In 2021, CH hosted a VAWA community outreach event with local law enforcement and a VAWA workshop in partnership with South Carolina State Attorney General's Office to inform the community members of domestic violence and their rights under federal law.

We continue to work with our families of domestic violence by providing them transfers to other communities when necessary. We also refer the families to our Resident Service Department for additional resources as well as encourage them to collaborate with the police and local domestic violence advocates.